



## Education: A Shared Concern of Governors

During the weekend of February 21-22, I joined fellow governors from across the country at the National Governors Association Winter Meeting in Washington, D.C. We discussed issues that affect all Kansans including jobs and the economy, education, and health care. I had meetings with President Bush, his Cabinet, Members of Congress, and business leaders to discuss the common challenges facing states.

On Sunday, I was asked to chair the Education, Early Childhood, and Workforce (ECW) Committee meeting. The focus of the meeting was on the topic of "Ready for Tomorrow: Helping All Students Achieve Secondary and Postsecondary Success." I was honored to step in and chair such an important committee. With education being one of the most vital issues to our state economies, especially in Kansas, I was pleased to lead this discussion with my fellow Governors and share the belief that states' economic competitiveness will depend on the postsecondary attainment level of their population.

Two key points were made during the meeting that I found interesting. First, four out of ten new jobs will require at least an Associates Degree. Due to the growth in high-skilled jobs and retiring Baby Boomers, experts predict a shortage of at least ten million workers with some postsecondary education.

Second, all high school students are not being prepared rigorously for college, work and citizenship. Research shows that the single greatest factor for student success is access to a rigorous curriculum. Unfortunately, only three in ten students complete the minimum courses for postsecondary preparation.

We must do better, for our children's sake and for our state as a whole. Education, jobs and economic growth are intricately tied. I will continue working with legislators, business members, parents, teachers, superintendents, and university presidents to find ways to support our children in the classroom, from kindergarten to college, and everything in between.